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ARTICLES:

(1) Okinawa governor blasts FM Okada's remark on possible continued

use of Futenma base

ASAHI ONLINE (Full)
12:40, February 5, 2010

At his regular news conference on the morning of Feb. 5, Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima commented on Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada's recent mention of the possibility of the continued use of the Futenma Air Station. He voiced the following criticism: "I wonder if he is abandoning the policy. It doesn't really make sense at all."

Nakaima also made the following remarks on the Futenma issue: "The whole process started from the fact that (the Futenma base) is dangerous and it produces terrible noise." "If he is saying that it is possible not to do anything about the problem, does this mean that he has no confidence at all (in the process of identifying a relocation site) or he has no intention to deal with this issue squarely? It is rather incomprehensible."

With regard to statements by Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano and others about "starting from zero in the search for the most appropriate relocation site," Nakaima said: "What does 'starting from zero' really mean? I would really like to hear a definition of it one of these days," expressing his distrust of the government's stance.

(2) LDP in Okinawa Assembly unanimously agrees to submit proposal for relocating Futenma airfield out of prefecture to regular session

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OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Excerpts)
February 5, 2010

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the largest group among the ruling parties in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, held a plenary meeting on Feb. 4 and unanimously decided to submit a letter of opinion and a resolution seeking the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corp's Futenma Air Station out of the prefecture to a regular session of the assembly set to be convened on Feb. 10. The party will now begin to coordinate views on the draft with the opposition side. Officials of the LDP Okinawa Chapter and the New Komeito's head office in Okinawa Prefecture on the same day met with Governor Hirokazu Nakaima and urged him to change his policy and support the relocation of the Futenma facilities out of the prefecture. Nakaima steered clear of making any comment on the issue, just noting: "We have yet to see what proposal the government will make and how the situation will develop. Changes are occurring (as a result of) the Nago mayoral election. We are holding discussions in preparation for the opening of the assembly."

Referring to the ruling and opposition camps holding talks with an eye toward the adoption of the resolution and the letter of opinion by the Prefectural Assembly, Nakaima praised the move, saying, "My position is that it is desirable to relocate the Futenma facilities out of the prefecture. Nothing has changed in that regard."

(3) Association of municipalities in central Okinawa asks government to amend SOFA

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Excerpts)
February 5, 2010

(Tokyo)

Mitsuo Gima, chairman of the association of municipalities in central Okinawa and mayor of Urasoe, on Feb. 4 met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Kinya Takino at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (the Kantei) and handed a letter of request, agreed on by the association in January, seeking an amendment to the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Takino reportedly replied, "I will convey your request to the prime minister and the chief cabinet secretary without fail, and do my utmost."

Gima on the same day also submitted similar requests to Senior Vice Foreign Minister Koichi Takemasa, Senior Vice Cabinet Office Minister Atsushi Oshima and Parliamentary Defense Secretary Daiso Kusuda. The three officials each expressed their understanding and pledged to convey the request to their ministers.

(4) Foundation of support for Governor Nakaima in upcoming gubernatorial election shaken

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Excerpts)
February 5, 2010

(Commentary)

With the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the largest ruling party in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly, having decided to adopt a resolution and a letter of opinion seeking the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma airfield out of the prefecture and the

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New Komeito considering adopting a similar stance, there are now no assembly groups that share with Governor Hirokazu Nakaima a stance on the Futenma relocation issue. The governor, who has not totally ruled out the possibility of (accepting) relocation within the prefecture, will likely find himself on his own in the regular party representatives' session and general question session during the prefectoral assembly in February.

The governor's stance of not switching his policy to supporting the relocation of Futenma facilities out of the prefecture could further aggravate dissatisfaction felt in the ruling parties, which could shake the foundation of support for him in the upcoming gubernatorial election.

A senior official of the LDP Okinawa Chapter, who met with Nakaima, complained: "It is the government that decides the relocation policy. I wonder why the governor is still adhering to the Henoko plan." Another official also turned around and said: "We do not care if a political party and the prefecture have different views. We will uncompromisingly call on the government to relocate the Futenma functions out of the prefecture."

The reason that Nakaima is reluctant to make an overall policy switch is that he is insisting on the removal of the potential danger of Futenma Air Station. The governor harbors the strong perception that if he calls for relocation outside the prefecture and no relocation site is found, he would be held responsible for making the present situation a permanent facility. However, the basis of this perception has weakened with the election of a Nago mayor who opposes relocation to Nago.

(5) Priority must be given to implementation of Japan-U.S. agreement

SANKEI (Page 7) (Full)
February 3, 2010

James E. Auer, Director of the Center for U.S.-Japan Studies and Cooperation, Vanderbilt University

A team of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's administration is investigating the existence of a purported secret pact allowing U.S. warships carrying nuclear weapons to pass through Japan's territorial waters and call at Japanese ports. The investigation reportedly covers the period since 1960, the year the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty was revised. The U.S. warships that called at Japanese ports since 1991 have not carried any strategic nuclear weapons, so the agreement no longer has practical significance. Nevertheless, the Hatoyama administration seems to believe that it has to let the people know the truth.

Professor Reischauer's view

Up until 1991, the U.S. government maintained the policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard its naval vessels making port calls overseas. This made

extremely certain that Japan was being protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

The Japanese government's stance until 1991 was that nuclear-armed U.S. warships were not allowed to enter the country, that the introduction of nuclear weapons into the country was subject to

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prior consultations, and that it would always say 'no' to the introduction of nuclear weapons. But the Soviet Union did not believe in this stance of Japan. The reason was because saying 'no' all the time to the introduction of nuclear weapons would diminish the U.S. deterrent for Japan.

In 1981 professor and former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer told newspaper reporter Yoshihisa Komori that Japan had agreed in 1960 to allow stopovers by nuclear-armed U.S. ships and planes without prior consultations. According to opinion polls back then, a lot of Japanese people believed professor Reischauer's explanation. This showed their support for the Japan-U.S. alliance and the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Professor Reischauer also said to Komori that in order also to sustain the reliability of the nuclear umbrella, the Japanese government should let people know the truth. I believe that if Japanese leaders had done so with courage, the people would have accepted that explanation.

Three pressing issues

Needless to say, examinations of history might be necessary. But I want to see the Hatoyama administration make greater efforts to win public trust about pressing issues rather than to explain to the people about a policy that has lost its significance.

Of those pressing issues, top priorities are: (1) the difference between China and the United States as Japan's partner; (2) fundamental impediments to building an equal Japan-U.S. alliance; and (3) consideration for Okinawa under the existing base realignment plan.

On the first point, some experts close to the administration are saying that Japan, China, and the United States should build equal trilateral relations (like an equilateral triangle) as the three major economic powers in the Asia-Pacific region. The realization of an equilateral relationship would be the worst possible scenario for Japan.

While claiming its sovereignty over Japan's Senkaku Islands, China is planning military expansion by means of nuclear and conventional weapons with the aim of controlling the waters east of Taiwan with an eye on oil resources there. Taking up the history issue unfairly in schools, China is trying to instill anti-Japanese sentiments in people's minds. In view of this, Japan needs a close military alliance with the United States and the U.S. nuclear deterrence for its economic survival and basic security.

On the second point, I do not believe there is anything wrong with Prime Minister Hatoyama's stance to seek a "more equal Japan-U.S. alliance." But if he wants to achieve it, Hatoyama must convince the people that "Japan is entitled to exercise the right to collective self-defense," as he said before becoming prime minister. That is because if Japan cannot exercise the right to collective self-defense, the exceptional Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces will not be able to work effectively to defend the country in cooperation with the United States. In view of the prospect that a combination of the military capabilities of Japan and the United States can further increase deterrence, a battle by the SDF alone would be a waste of taxpayers' money.

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Consideration given to not seeking a new replacement site

Lastly, although the need to alleviate the burden on the people of Okinawa has been mentioned, there has not been sufficient explanation on it. Until several months ago, the name Futenma was hardly known among the Japanese people and researchers on Japan in the United States, but it is heard frequently. At present, there is a tremendous misunderstanding in Japan about what was agreed with the United States, and this misunderstanding might endanger the security of Japan.

Under the realignment plan based on the Japan-U.S. agreement, the United States will close down the Futenma Air Station and return it to Japan along with other bases and land in Okinawa. The United States will also move some 8,000 Marines to Guam. It has selected a location on Camp Schwab in Henoko, Nago, as the relocation site for Futenma. Building a completely new replacement base in Okinawa would be undesirable for the local residents. The agreement shows the United States' consideration for avoiding such consequences.

Professor Reischauer said that the Japanese government could have believed that if it revealed the truth, it would have been able to obtain the people's understanding. I agree with him.

The Japan-U.S. agreement on U.S. force realignment was reached in line with the policy not to harm the natural environment or the country's security, thinking of ways to reduce the burden on Okinawans. I hope Prime Minister Hatoyama will explain this to the people once again along with the difference between the United States and China and the issue of the right to collective self-defense.

(6) Editorial: U.S. defense program - The growing importance of strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)
February 3, 2010

Amidst an increasingly severe security environment, the United States drew up national defense guidelines placing importance on cooperation with its allies.

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), released by the Department of Defense (DOD) for the first time under the Obama administration, cites winning the Afghan and Iraqi wars as the top priorities of its defense strategy.

The QDR points out the need for the continued strategy of destroying the Al Qaeda terrorist network, expressing the DOD's determination to bring the war on terror to a successful conclusion.

In the QDR, the United States pledges to devote all its resources, including military power and diplomacy, to preventing and deterring conflicts, while stressing that it will make meticulous preparations for any emergency.

The 2010 QDR is formulated on the basis of the present situation, in which the U.S. is facing a great change in the security environment with the expansion of threats such as the rise of China and India, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation.

Laying emphasis on responses to diversifying threats, the QDR

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stresses the need for cooperation with allies and friendly nations. Behind this is the U.S.'s perception that its military superiority has relatively declined.

The QDR indicates a strong sense of alarm toward China's military buildup policy, which lacks transparency, as did the previous QDR. Citing China's ballistic missiles, fast-attack boats, cyber-attack capability, and the development and deployment of anti-satellite weapons, the QDR points out that many questions about China's long-term intentions remain.

The QDR also refers to the fear that the instability or collapse of nuclear-armed countries would increase proliferation at a stroke. This is because the United States is concerned about the rampancy of

international terrorist organizations, North Korea's nuclear testing and long-range ballistic missile launches, and Iran's nuclear development.

The expansion in the variety of threats could weaken the U.S. military's forward deployment and nuclear deterrence. It could have a serious impact on Japan's security. Close coordination between Japan and the United States is necessary.

The Japan-U.S. director general-level talks on deepening the bilateral alliance have begun in Tokyo, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the revised Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

It is important to reflect in the Japan-U.S. talks the QDR's perception that China's military buildup and North Korea's nuclear programs are threats. In light of the Chinese military's rapid modernization, it is indispensable for Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the U.S. military to make efforts for strengthening cooperation and deterrence.

The QDR sets out a policy of steadily carrying out the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and implementing the long-term stationing of U.S. forces in Japan and their reorganization in Guam.

It is important that Japan and the U.S. share the same perception on the security environments in Asia and the world. It is also important for the two countries to deepen strategic dialogue on looking into role-sharing and cooperation.

At the same time, in order to allow such dialogue, settling the Futenma relocation issue by May is absolutely necessary. Japan can put off a conclusion no longer.

(7) Lingering calls for DPJ Secretary General Ozawa to give an account

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)
February 4, 2010

Lower House member Tomohiro Ishikawa, arrested over fund management body Rikuzan-kai's alleged violation of the Political Funds Control Law in its purchase of land, will likely be indicted on Feb. 4. Although Ozawa is unlikely to be indicted, since Ishikawa is a former secretary of Ozawa, his political responsibility will remain. The focus is now shifting to whether Ozawa, the de facto top leader of the government and the ruling parties, will resign or not.

Ozawa during a press conference on the 1st said: "If public

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prosecutors press charges against me, my responsibility would be heavy." People took that as a hint he would step down as secretary general with possibility of his being indicted without arrest in mind. However, the view that Ozawa would not be indicted spread on the 3rd, the day before the deadline for prosecutors to either release from detention or charge Ishikawa. DPJ members, who had been waiting for the outcome of the investigation, began acting, based on the precondition that Ozawa would not be indicted.

For instance, Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Seiji Maehara, one of the "seven magistrates" who are distancing themselves from Ozawa, on the third supported Ozawa's remaining in office as secretary general, although he had been talking about Ozawa's resignation. Members of a group led by Deputy Finance Minister Yoshihiko Noda also unanimously agreed to give top priority to party unity at their meeting on the same night. A certain deputy minister stressed: "If Mr. Ozawa is not indicted, it is not necessary for him to quit. Rather, it would prove there were no irregularities."

There is, however, another view. Remarked a mid-ranking lawmaker: "Even if Ozawa is not indicted, he will bear moral responsibility if his former secretaries are indicted. At a press conference in late January Ozawa acknowledged that he is responsible as the head (of the political fund Rikuzan-kai). There is concern that if he continues to serve as DPJ secretary general, the opposition parties

will continue to pursue him in the Diet session, which would inflate public distrust in politics, and "the public would take a harsh view of the party," as a veteran lawmaker said. Regarding Ishikawa, who will likely be indicted, many are of the following opinion expressed by a high government official: "He will not resign as a lawmaker, but he might voluntarily quit the party. Party executives are refraining from looking into disciplinary action against Ishikawa, as it could lead to Ozawa's resignation. How Ishikawa takes responsibility could be up to Ozawa.

Ozawa did not resign as head of the DPJ when his first state-funded secretary was arrested and indicted over the political funds donation scandal involving Nishimatsu Construction Co. in March last year. He stepped down six weeks later on the pretext of strengthening party unity. The perfect timing of the replacement of the party head boosted public support ratings for the party, resulting in its victory in the Lower House election.

A close aide to Ozawa said: "If he is not indicted, he will not take responsibility by resigning as secretary general." The aide also made this observation: "There is a possibility of his choosing to step down at some point in order for the DPJ to win the upcoming Upper House election, pretending that his resignation is not directly connected to the scandal."

(Corrected copy) Decision on SDF dispatch to Haiti to be made on Feb. 5.

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 2, 2010

The government decided yesterday to make a final decision on Feb. 5 at a cabinet meeting on its plan to dispatch a Self-Defense Forces (SDF) engineering unit to earthquake-hit Haiti to join the UN peacekeeping operations (PKO). Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa will then issue an order on the 5th to dispatch the SDF unit. The

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SDF unit is expected to comprise about 350 members, mainly Ground Self-Defense Force personnel.

ROOS